

The End of His Rope

A Story of a Fortune Hunter in the Swiss Alps

By F. A. MITCHEL

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Interlaken, in the Swiss Alps, is a central point for tourists for making excursions either into the neighboring valleys or on to the mountains. The town, which is simply a cluster of hotels with a casino, is built on a plain between two lakes, deriving its name from its location, each lake about ten or a dozen miles long and about a mile wide. To the south of these lakes rise the peaks of the Bernese Alps—the Elger, Jungfrau, Monch and others. From Interlaken a cog railway carries tourists up steep inclines to Grindelwald, Scheldig, and thence down to Lauterbrunnen. From Lauterbrunnen one may be swung up by cable several thousand feet to Murren, where a near view can be obtained of the surrounding group of mountains.

One summer some tourists started on the cog railway for Scheldig, from whence the men of the party intended to attempt to climb the Jungfrau. The cog railway now extends farther up the mountain, but at that time one could travel by rail no farther than Scheldig. In this party were Miss Della Denton of New York and Mr. Archie Pendleton of Chicago. Miss Denton was an heiress, while Mr. Pendleton was a young lawyer of moderate means who had but recently been admitted to the bar.

Touring in Europe affords every facility for loveliness, and Pendleton had availed himself of the opportunity to woo Miss Denton. He seemed about to secure the prize when a young Britisher, heir to an earldom, came upon the scene, and it became a tie between him and the American. Pendleton had the mortification and disappointment to see his suit held up by nothing more or less than a title. Worse than this, from the time Lord Boyingham entered the contest for Miss Denton's hand he treated the Chicagoan with that towering superiority which has made John Bull unpopular with all other races.

There are hotels at Scheldig, and it had been arranged that the ladies of the party should put up at one of them while the men made the attempt upon the mountain. There were three men intending to go up, but one of them, becoming fearful of his heart's action in the thin air even at Scheldig, decided not to risk a higher altitude. This left Boyingham and Pendleton the only ones to go except the guides. There were two guides, armed with axes and alpenstocks, one for each end of the little procession.

When the party left their friends standing on the porch of the hotel both Boyingham and Pendleton looked back at Miss Denton, each for a good by. Boyingham was elated, Pendleton depressed, for the smile she bestowed on the former had an evident meaning to it, while the one she gave Pendleton conveyed nothing more than good will. The men moved off, encouraged by a cheer from those who remained, and were soon lost by a turn in their path taking them around the side of the first mountain.

It was 10 o'clock when the climbers started, and the day was fine. Through a telescope on the porch they were watched, being occasionally seen like a dotted line far up on the mountain side. About noon the weather began to thicken, with frequent snow flurries, and they were visible no longer.

It was nearly night when two of the party, Lord Boyingham and one of the guides, Hans Dyckman, returned, their blanched faces and agitation denoting there had been an accident.

"Where are the others?" asked a clamor of voices in tones of dread. "Lost, I fear," said Boyingham.

At that moment Della Denton joined those about the returned climbers and hearing Boyingham's words, staggered. "What has happened?" asked all at once.

"Tell them, Hans," said Boyingham. "The snow covered our way," said Hans, "and getting on was difficult. We were crossing a ridge. Brouwer was in advance, with Mr. Pendleton next, his lordship third and I fourth, all bound together by the rope. Brouwer and Mr. Pendleton had crossed and were cutting steps in the ice on the other side. Something we knew not what, gave way on the other side and we felt a jerk on the rope. It had broken between Brouwer and Mr. Pendleton. His lordship was on the edge of the divide. Presently there was another jerk. Mr. Pendleton went down, and his lordship fell back, I catching him in my arms."

"But the others?" exclaimed the excited listeners. "How far did they fall? Were they killed?"

"That we don't know," replied the guide. "It was snowing, and we could not see a dozen yards. We concluded to return for ropes, go back and as soon as it is light tomorrow make an investigation. They have provisions and flasks of liquor, and if they are not killed we may save them."

At this moment the landlord took up

the end of the rope that had been severed between Boyingham and Pendleton and scrutinized it. Presently he dropped it and went away.

"Why did you examine that rope?" asked a guest.

"To see if it had been broken."

"Well?"

"It was broken. The end was frayed."

About midnight a party, provided with such paraphernalia as were necessary to their purpose, made ready to start in quest of the missing guide and Pendleton. Lord Boyingham declared that there was no use in attempting to reach them; that he had looked down into a crevasse several hundred feet deep, into which he was sure they had fallen. He declined to go back with the party, making an excuse that he had been so "cut up" by the accident and the loss of the two men that he would be of no use in the rescue. Since no one was wanted in the party who could not assist it was deemed best for him to remain in the hotel.

The party started about 1 o'clock. They could travel over a known path till nearly dawn, which would bring them near the scene of the accident as soon as it was light enough to see to what depths the men had fallen. Fortunately the weather had changed, and shortly after 2 o'clock a gray streak appeared in the cloudless east. The party consisted of a Mr. Bowers, an American stopping at the hotel where the excursionists had put up, two porters and Dyckman leading the way.

About half past 2 they reached the ridge where the accident had occurred, and Bowers, taking the advance, climbed it, sitting on it with a leg on either side. Looking down, he saw that the tourists must have fallen into a gap, but how deep it was he could not tell. The rest of the party, being informed of what he was about to do, all advanced, he descending to an icy ledge not far below. The men in falling must have struck this ledge and, unable to stop themselves, had slid into the gap.

When all had crossed the last man threw the coils of rope over to them, and Bowers volunteered to be lowered to discover whether the men could be found and whether they were dead or alive. A rope was placed around his body, and a code of signals having been arranged, he was let down. When he had gone some forty feet, the rope slackening, it was evident that he had struck bottom. He was then heard to call, and a faint response came up. He signaled to be raised and, reaching the party, said that the gap was filled with soft snow; that he had called and received an answer. When being raised he looked for the owner of the voice and saw him some fifty feet away. The point from which he had been lowered being altered to meet the new conditions, he went down again with another rope. Presently a signal was given on each of these ropes, and Bowers and Brouwer were both hauled up. Brouwer was well nigh gone, but was able to point out where Pendleton could be found, the two having conversed after their fall.

Bowers again went down with an extra rope and struck Pendleton lying apparently unconscious, though if Bowers had not been immediately over him he would not have seen him, no deeply buried was he in the snow. Then Bowers and Pendleton were both drawn up, Pendleton showing no sign of life. But glass being placed over his mouth showed moisture, and the party, going to work on him with a will, pouring down liquor at the same time, finally revived him.

Neither of the men had been injured by their fall into the snow. They were on the eve of perishing by cold. As soon as they were able to proceed the party descended to Scheldig.

Great was the rejoicing at the hotel when the two men who had been considered lost appeared walking with their rescuers down the mountain. When they came up to the porch it was crowded with people cheering and waiting to them. Then some one asked, "Where's Lord Boyingham?" An attendant replied: "His lordship went down to Interlaken an hour ago. He received a telegram calling him away."

The meeting between Pendleton and Della Denton was far different from their parting. The title that had tempted her had shriveled since it must be taken with a man who was at once dishonorable and a coward. Not only that, but the cold had reached to her own heart. The belief that Pendleton had been killed gave her a shock that surprised her. One glance from Pendleton at the woman he loved told him that he had won.

When something of the excitement had subsided the landlord asked Pendleton to come into a private room. The rope with which the climber had started the day before was still about his waist. The landlord took up the end and, looking at it, threw it from him.

"What is it?" asked Pendleton. "It was cut," was the reply in a scathing tone. "The dog feared you would drag him over and cut you off. Before his return he frayed the rope by rubbing it between stones."

Pendleton was thunderstruck. The landlord continued:

"His lordship wrote a telegram to himself stating that his mother was dying. He did it for an excuse to get away and left before your return. He dared not face your end of the rope."

"Keep it to yourself," said Pendleton after a moment's thought. "Pendleton kept the secret till a few years later he heard the Britisher was trying again to marry an American fortune, when he sent his lordship an order to keep off, an order that was speedily obeyed."

Della Denton did not know the secret till she had been Mrs. Pendleton several years.



Good Form

Correct Letter Writing.

A communication or gift received by a person in social life must be acknowledged. This is a rule so emphatic that it has no exceptions.

And equally is it the rule that if the communication be a card or note it must be responded to in precisely the same form. Acting upon this, no woman need fear making a mistake in this branch of her social duties.

A visiting card, slight as it is, should not be ignored unless it bears the letters "P. D. C." In that instance it is an answer to courtesies received as well as an announcement of departure and therefore might be said to close communication.

A receipt of a card following an event of importance to the family requires a card in return. For example, after a birth or death or other occasions less momentous it is not uncommon for friends to post visiting cards as indicating that they are aware of the happening. Sometimes merely a word or line is written on the card, as "Condoleances," "Felicitations," according to the nature of the event. The return card, which should be sent within a couple of days, may have the word "Thanks" written on it, or it may be blank except for the engraved name and address.

It is not considered good form to answer a note with a card save after a death, when a bereaved family is permitted to make little effort, and its members may spare themselves the work of writing notes.

Invitations are always to be answered in the same form in which they are received, so that if a note comes written in the first person the response also should contain the personal pronoun. More formal invitations, in which the third person is employed, require the third in return.

Incidentally a person who is unaccustomed to writing this most formal communication, which takes much time before the food reaches it, in answering the response continues to contain the third at the end as at the beginning.

More than one person has committed the error of beginning correctly with the third and ending with the first person.

A Few Table Rules.

A woman who gives much attention to diet and lives up to the best ideas in this line has the following rules neatly framed in a conspicuous place in her dining room where the family may be impressed with them:

First.—Five or ten minutes before beginning to eat a meal drink a glass of cold water. This will leave the stomach before the food reaches it, and will carry with it any mucus which has accumulated since last eating, thus leaving the walls of the stomach clear and ready to be activated by the newly arrived food.

Second.—Never take a second cup of coffee. You will not care for a second if you moisten your food sufficiently with saliva. Take dinner coffee always with dessert or after rather than before, as it thus aids digestion.

Third.—Never wash your food down with liquids, but masticate each mouthful well and it will be sufficiently moist and will promote the flow of gastric juices, thereby preparing the stomach still further for its work.

Fourth.—Never eat "until too full." By a little attention to the matter you will learn when to stop and thus avoid the consequences of overeating. One mouthful too much is apt to cause disarrangement of the digestive system. This may seem like putting it rather strong, but you know that even a teaspoonful too much will cause a distention, and the same applies to the closely packed organs of the human body, where disarranged gastric fluids will produce illness.

Telephone Invitations.

When accepting an invitation over the telephone it is the part of wisdom to follow it with a written acceptance, in which the day, date and hour are repeated. Only in this way can a woman be certain that no error is made in the time, and the sense of security given is worth the effort.

Telephone invitations will always appear to be informal and sometimes are, but a woman will have no difficulty in deciding the point if she gives heed to the hour appointed. A luncheon at half past 1 o'clock, to play bridge afterward, may be regarded as formal; dinner at any time after a quarter to 7 is also formal. Earlier than these hours is considered to be informal.

Bridesmaids Gowns.

It is customary for a bride to select the style and material of the bridesmaids' dresses, and if the girls are not well enough off to have many dresses she should assuredly be careful to choose styles that are not pronounced, so that the dresses may be worn on other occasions. Complaints about this are not infrequent from girls who have acted as bridesmaids when they were obliged to buy dresses they could never use again on account of the combination of colors or the exaggerated mode fancied at the moment by the bride.



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